



Washington, D. C. 20505

13 December 1976

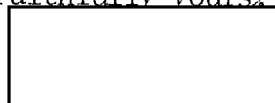
NOTE FOR: Rick Inderfurth

Rick:

I thought you would be interested in this Atlas which is the latest of the series of unclassified atlases we have turned out in recent years. They have a widespread utility and have proved very popular in and out of Government.

The attached note provides background on our work in this area.

Faithfully yours,



E. H. Knoche

Attachment:

Indian Ocean Atlas  
and Covering Note

*Orig - addressee  
2 - DDCI  
1 - C*

EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE

*Transmitted to  
White House Box*

10 December 1976

Background Statement on CIA Mapping Work and the Indian Ocean Atlas

CIA maps are essential parts of our intelligence research, reporting, briefing, and operational planning tasks. The maps are primarily small scale and highlight special subjects according to the end users' needs.

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By force of necessity, the Agency was an early leader among U.S. Government agencies in the development of computer aided cartography using automatic plotters, and indeed has an international reputation for achievements in this field. Both our special technical maps and the basic line-and-point data on the thematic and general reference maps we prepare are increasingly produced by automatic plotters rather than by human draftsmen.

The Indian Ocean Atlas is the most recent in a series of special area reference aids prepared by CIA. It is designed to provide a succinct but comprehensive guide to an area of increasing concern to a broad range of U.S. Government officials. The first of the CIA atlases was produced on China in 1967. This was revised in the Peoples Republic of China atlas prepared for President Nixon's visit to China (1971). Other atlases have included Issues in the Middle East (1973), USSR Agriculture (1974), PRC Administrative Atlas (1975). An atlas of the Polar Regions is in production. These atlases draw on available knowledge both from within the Government and from academia.

Because of the obvious value of these atlases to the scholarly community and to other Government users, the first few were widely distributed to specialists and academic institutions outside the Government. Beginning with the PRC atlas, all atlases have also been carried for sale by the Public Printer. The atlases are intentionally kept unclassified to enable this wider use. Scholars and other specialists have consistently acclaimed the atlases.

6400 copies of the Indian Ocean Atlas have been printed, 2400 for the GPO, some 500 for dissemination by the Agency to specialists in the academic and business community, and approximately 1500 for distribution to appropriate offices throughout the Government.